

Commission on Teacher Credentialing

***Meeting of
November 7-8, 2001***

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: PREP - 5

COMMITTEE: Preparation Standards Committee

**TITLE: Discussion of Options for Restructuring the
Administrative Services Credential**

_____ Action

X Information

_____ Report

Strategic Plan Goal(s):

Goal 1: Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators
- Sustain high quality standards for the performance of credential candidates

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Discussion of Options for Restructuring the Administrative Services Credential

Professional Services Division

October 19, 2001

Executive Summary

At the direction of the Commission, Commission staff have been conducting a focussed review of the Administrative Services Credential during 2001. Forums and a statewide survey conducted in the winter and spring of 2001 suggest that the Commission should consider significant revisions to the current structure of administrator preparation and licensure. This report provides an overview of the input received from the field through these early efforts, and poses a series of policy questions for the Commission's consideration.

Policy(s) Issue to be Considered

How should school administrators be prepared and licensed in California?

Fiscal Impact Statement

Activities related to the review and potential revision of this credential are covered under the Commission's base budget.

Recommendation(s)

That the Commission engage in a substantive discussion of the policy questions in this report and provide staff direction regarding next steps.

Discussion of Options for Restructuring the Administrative Services Credential

Professional Services Division

November 8, 2001

Overview

The expertise of school administrators is essential to the success of the reforms that have been initiated in California because school administrators have a direct influence on the quality of teaching and learning in California's public schools. In every school improvement program, school administrators play a key role. The school administrator's interactions are crucial to the success of teachers and students. In the current era of standards and accountability, it is both timely and important to examine how school administrators are prepared, supported and licensed.

Growing concerns about the effectiveness of administrator preparation and licensure led the Commission to direct staff to conduct a focused review of the Administrative Services Credential. A series of public forums held during the winter of 2001 provided an opportunity for interaction on these issues among stakeholders, including existing administrators, administrators in training, higher education faculty and administration, parents and business community representatives. Participants discussed the current structure of the Administrative Services Credential, the content of professional preparation programs, the need for induction and support for new administrators, alternative program options, and recruitment and retention of site and district office administrative positions.

Forum participants discussed what is working well, what is not working well and made suggestions for improvement in the overall system of administrator preparation and licensure. Common themes emerging from the forums included the following:

- The credential structure should ensure that all new administrators receive support, mentoring and assistance during the early years of employment as an administrator.
- The new administrator is so heavily involved with the demands of their new position that additional course requirements for the second tier (Professional level Credential) are difficult to complete and in many cases duplicative and irrelevant.
- Alternative delivery systems should be developed to facilitate the recruitment and training of administrators in "hard to staff" schools or to help districts "grow their own" administrators.
- The complexity of the job of the administrator, the demands of the responsibilities and the level of compensation are a disincentive for individuals to seek administrative positions.
- The current structure of the Administrative Services Credential may also be a barrier that discourages individuals from applying for an administrative position.
- The second tier (Professional) Credential needs to be drastically redesigned or eliminated.
- There is a need for better dialogue between institutions that prepare administrators and employing school districts.

- There is often redundancy in content between the Preliminary and Professional levels of credential preparation.
- Field experiences during preliminary preparation are often offered part time because candidates are not able to obtain release time to participate more extensively. Thus many administrators do not get an adequate sense of the scope of administrative responsibilities prior to employment.
- There needs to be a better blend between theory and practice.
- The content of preliminary preparation needs to be updated to better reflect the current demands of administration.
- The content of professional development after employment of an administrator needs to be monitored by the employing school district.

During the spring of 2001, Commission staff joined with faculty at California State University, Stanislaus to conduct a survey of recent graduates of administrator preparation programs. The survey focussed on the perceptions of recent graduates regarding the adequacy of their preparation for the role of administration. Approximately 7500 surveys were sent to candidates completing Administrative Services Credential programs over the past three years. Of the 7500 sent out, 2468 were completed and returned, 532 were undeliverable and 130 completed surveys were returned after the deadline. Respondents written comments were consistent with the themes emerging from the Commission sponsored forums.

In addition to concerns regarding the nature of preparation and the structure of the credential, there are growing concerns both nationally and within the state regarding the supply of administrators. A 1998 study by national school administrator organizations showed that 50% of surveyed school districts reported a shortage of school administrators. These shortages exist in urban, rural and suburban districts. The Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates an increase in the need for school administrators of up to 20% through the year 2005. A study submitted for the Association of California School Administrators showed that over 98% of the California school district superintendents surveyed had experienced a shortage of qualified administrators applying for principal positions. Though California colleges and universities enroll close to 2,000 individuals each year in preparation programs, half to two-thirds of the graduates of "Tier 1" administrative credential programs are issued "Certificates of Eligibility" because they do not immediately obtain employment as administrators and complete their second phase of preparation for the credential. Meanwhile, administrative positions in many schools remain unfilled. Interviews with potential administrators indicate that increasing complexity of the position coupled with challenges in some schools make the job unattractive.

The forums and survey conducted in the winter and spring identified a number of issues that need resolution. A Task Force appointed by the Executive Director has been reviewing the outcomes of these activities and discussing options for reform and restructuring in this credential area. As the Commission turns its attention to future preparation and licensure of administrators, a number of key policy issues need to be addressed. The following questions are intended to provide a framework for Commission review.

Policy Question One: What does the 21st Century school require in terms of management at each level?

Policy Question Two: Which school management positions should require a credential?

Policy Question Three: What should be the content of administrator preparation?

Policy Question Four: Which entities should be authorized to provide administrator preparation?

Policy Question Five: Which decisions about administrator preparation should be left to local school districts to decide?

Policy Question Six: What should the structure of administrator preparation involve?

Policy Question Seven: What does an appropriate "Learning to Lead" continuum look like for school and district administrators?

Policy Question Eight: What is an appropriate accountability system for administrator preparation program?

